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THE KABUL TIMES

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Founded in 1962

Saratan 22-1404 Sunday 13 July 2025 INo: 89-Vol: LXII

DAILY

Kabul 30° Sunny | Kandahar 36° Sunny | Herat 32° Sunny | Jalalabad 38° Sunny | Mazar-e-Sharif 38° Sunny | Bamyan 24° Sunny

Qatar ready to support Afghanistan's foreign relations, official

KABUL: Dr. Mirdef Al-Qashouti, Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of the State of Qatar in Kabul, met with Mawlavi Amir Khan Muttaqi, the country's acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, saying that his country is ready to play a constructive role in strengthening Afghanistan's foreign relations across multilateral platforms.

The ministry said in a statement on Saturday that both sides discussed strengthening bilateral ties, enhancing diplomatic engagement, and addressing key regional developments.

Qatari Chargé d'Affaires described the relationship between the two nations as steadily growing, according to the statement.

Meanwhile, Muttaqi emphasized the importance of Afghanistan's ties with Qatar, praising the country's supportive role in various regional and international forums.

The Kabul Times

Afghan Ambassador in Uzbekistan Calls Strengthening Political Ties 'vital for mutual interests

TASHKENT: Shaikh Abdul Ghafar Bahr, the Ambassador of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to Uzbekistan, in a meeting with Uzbek Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov, emphasized on further strengthening of political relations between the two neighboring states, saying that the enhanced political cooperation is vital for the mutual benefits of the two neighboring countries, according to a statement from the embassy the other day.

The meeting, held at the Afghanistan Embassy in Tashkent, underscored the importance of strengthening political ties as a foundational step toward boosting economic, cultural, and commercial relations, the statement said.

Both sides also talked Afghan-Trans project agreement, which aims to improve regional connectivity, as well as visa facilitation measures for Afghan traders.

Simplifying border procedures to increase trade volume between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan has also been discussed in the meeting, the statement added.

Saidov expressed appreciation for the active role of the Afghan Embassy in fostering collaboration and assured the continuation of economic cooperation.

He underscored the importance of continued efforts to strengthen political relations, highlighting a shared commitment to building a more robust, long-term partnership grounded in mutual respect, strategic cooperation, and regional stability. **The Kabul Times**

12th UIC Congress: Modern railway technologies, developments discussed

KABUL: Mullah Mohammad Ishaq Sahibzada, Deputy Minister of Railways of the Ministry of Public Works, and his accompanying delegation, participated in the 12th Congress of the International Union of Railways (UIC), where modern railway technologies and developments have been discussed, the ministry said in a statement Saturday.

The event was hosted by the People's Republic of China and chaired by the country's Deputy Prime Minister. It brought together senior officials, railway experts, researchers, and representatives from leading railway companies across more than 60 countries, the statement said.

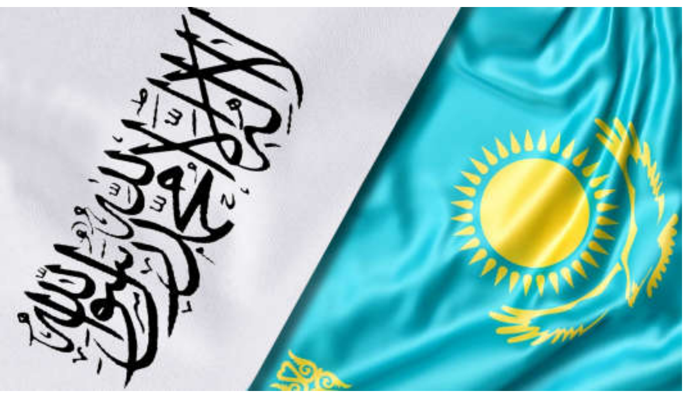
The congress featured high-level discussions on the latest advancements in railway infrastructure, capacity development, and the integration of modern technologies.

Prominent global companies and institutions also showcased their experiences, innovations, and cutting-edge railway technologies during the event. Afghanistan has been an active member of the International Union of Railways (UIC) since 2013, the statement added.

Afghanistan has been making efforts to standardize its railway network and build capacity by adopting international best practices and modern technologies.

The Kabul Times

Afghan, Kazakh officials hold talks on enhancing bilateral economic cooperation



KABUL: Nooruddin Azizi, the country's acting Minister of Industry and Commerce, met with Murat Nurtleu, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, to discuss strengthening bilateral economic cooperation, the ministry said in a statement Saturday.

Emphasizing the importance of strengthening trade and economic relations between Afghanistan and Kazakhstan, the two sides agreed to continue official exchanges to increase the volume of bilateral trade to $3 billion, the statement said.

The meeting proposed that cooperation should not be limited to the export of agricultural products; instead, special attention should also be given to the import and export of technology and industrial goods, the statement added.

The two sides also agreed to establish joint investments in road and railway transportation companies and highlighted the need to ease the visa process for Afghan traders, the statement said.

Both sides also discussed organizing an exhibition of Afghan domestic products in Kazakhstan, scheduled for August this year.

The Kazakh side expressed readiness to cooperate in hosting the event and pledged to announce the exact date soon.

Nurtleu reaffirmed his country's political, economic, and cultural support for Afghanistan.

He also announced Kazakhstan's readiness to provide vocational and technical training opportunities for approximately 100 Afghan students and to allocate humanitarian aid worth $1 million to Afghanistan.

The Kabul Times

Transport relations with Kazakhstan key part of Afghanistan strategy, ministry

KABUL: Mullah Abdul Salam Haidari, Road and Transport Deputy Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, met with Kalyakparov Maksat, Deputy Minister of Transport of Kazakhstan, to discuss bilateral transport cooperation, the ministry said in a statement Saturday.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed the bilateral International Road Transport Agreement and the launch of direct flights between Kabul and Astana, the statement said. Mullah Haidari stated that transport relations with Kazakhstan are a key part of Afghanistan's strategy to strengthen regional and international cooperation, according to the statement.

He emphasized that the implementation of these agreements could bring significant progress in trade and transit between the two countries.

Meanwhile, Kazakh deputy minister also stressed the importance of enhancing bilateral transport cooperation with Afghanistan.

The Kabul Times

MoIC supports artists, cultural figures, Azizi

KABUL: Mawlavi Atiqullah Azizi, Culture and Arts Deputy Minister of Information and Culture, said that the ministry is committed to supporting the country's artists and cultural figures, according to a statement from the ministry Saturday.

Addressing an exhibition of artworks and a gathering of the artists' association held at the residence of Ustad Khalilullah, Azizi commended the unity and solidarity among the artists and emphasized the need for greater coordination and collaboration to strengthen the role of art in Afghan society, according to the statement.

He highlighted the importance of preserving national identity through artistic expression and reiterated the government's willingness to support cultural initiatives that promote harmony and creativity.

According to the statement, the event brought together a diverse group of Afghan artists and cultural figures to showcase their works and discuss the current state of the arts in the country.

The exhibition featured traditional and contemporary pieces reflecting Afghanistan's rich cultural heritage and the evolving creativity of its artists.

The Kabul Times

ARCS supplies health services to 4,155 individuals in Faryab

KABUL: The Afghanistan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) said in a statement Saturday that it has provided healthcare services to 4,155 individuals in the country's northern province of Faryab during the past month of the current solar year.

These services included medical checkups and provision of medication for 3,639 patients, wound care, vaccine administration, malnutrition, and prenatal and postnatal consultations, the statement said.

The ARCS's teams also offered family planning support and delivered personalized medical advice to an additional 516 individuals in the province, the statement added.

They also offered maternity services to scores of women and provided nutritional food to hundreds of malnourished children, the statement concluded. **The Kabul Times**

International Daily
WWW.TheKabulTimes.com

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Food for thought

Today's generation guarantees our bright future

Disagreement leads to failure

Nations with a strong determination to overcome all internal challenges have reached the highest level of victory. By solving their internal disputes, they managed to advance and leave behind a brighter future for their inheritors.

These nations are those who had not allowed malicious individuals to interfere in their affairs. These two factors, unity and prevention of aliens' interferences, can be called the key to success in all aspects of the life of the nations.

This is a profound and eternal issue for those nations that are going through difficult stages of life and independence. Afghans, in the course of history, have been victims of invasion and aggression by superpowers, and our long history of resistance has imposed its heavy price on the great powers of the world. Actually, aliens do not appear only in the guise of cannons and tanks; rather, their most dangerous form is a secret conspiracy, internal infiltration, psychological warfare, and propaganda attack; therefore, any threat must be confronted with intelligence, prudence, and deep understanding.

As we, the Afghans, are in dire need of national unity and mutual tolerance than ever before, internal disagreements at this time are like fueling the fire of disagreements from aliens among our tribes and helping them further interfere in our internal affairs. The Afghans should avoid disagreement as it paves the way for the destruction of the country. We must identify the hands, languages, actions, and positions that work for the humiliation, division, harassment, and defaming of the Afghan nation. This should be noted that if the foundation of national unity among Afghans is not strengthened, weapons and force alone cannot solve the country's problems.

The failure of the past regimes has had an inevitable reason of disagreement.

This was why the path for the superpowers was paved to influence our nation and undermine the national unity, and take the Afghans and their governments hostage.

Also, experiences show that discord, division, and internal disputes are the main factors in the decline of nations, while unity, patience, and mutual understanding are considered the guarantee of survival, success, and progress.

Now, our people are largely enjoying sure security and protection of life, property, religion, and honor. This opportunity should be considered valuable.

The painful return of Afghan migrants from Iran

By: H.N

Migration is a long-standing and deeply ingrained phenomenon in the modern history of Afghanistan, one that has profoundly altered the lives of millions of Afghans over recent decades. Afghanistan has consistently ranked among the world's largest exporters of migrants. Factors such as war, insecurity, poverty, unemployment, and political instability have compelled millions to leave their homes and seek refuge in neighboring countries, particularly Iran.

However, what is currently unfolding is no longer migration, but rather the widespread and often forced return of Afghan migrants from neighboring countries, especially the Islamic Republic of Iran.

This return is not only devoid of promise but has cast a shadow of crisis over the Afghan community.

According to a recent report from the High Commission for Refugee Affairs of Afghanistan, over 500,000 Afghan migrants have been forcibly returned from Iran to Afghanistan in just the past month. This massive wave of return presents numerous humanitarian, legal, economic, and social challenges for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Ensuring shelter, livelihood, basic services, and the reintegration of returnees into Afghan society requires meticulous planning, national cooperation, and international humanitarian support. Without these efforts, the process could escalate into a broader and more profound crisis.

The migration of Afghans to Iran spans over four decades and can be examined in two major waves:

First Wave (1980s): Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, a large influx of Afghan migrants entered Iran. At the time, the Iranian government, with the slogan of "One Islamic Ummah," welcomed these migrants and facilitated residency for many of them.

Second Wave (From the 2000s to Present): As insecurity and internal conflict in Afghanistan persisted, Afghan migration to Iran continued. However, during this period, Iranian policies toward migrants became more stringent, with restrictions on employment, education, and residency.

Despite linguistic, cultural, and religious similarities, Iran's approach to Afghan migrants has undergone significant changes in recent years. Iran's recent measures regarding the forced expulsion of Afghans have prompted considerable human rights, humanitarian, and political concerns.

One of the primary reasons for the expulsion of Afghan migrants from Iran is the internal economic pressure within the country. With rising inflation, unemployment, and dwindling resources, many Iranian citizens have voiced dissatisfaction with the presence of Afghan migrants, particularly in low-wage jobs. In response to these social pressures and to alleviate economic burdens, the Iranian government has implemented policies aimed at expelling migrants.

Moreover, the lack of a clear legal framework for migrants' residency, coupled with border tensions, has further contributed to this situation. Many Afghan migrants in Iran live without official residency documents, and the absence of a structured immigration policy has left them vulnerable to immediate expulsion without legal recourse.

Iran's stringent policies have triggered a new humanitarian crisis along Afghanistan's eastern borders. Regions such as Nimroz, Farah, and Herat are witnessing the daily return of thousands of migrants, many of whom face significant hardships.

Simultaneously, the relationship between the populations of the two countries has been affected by these policies. Despite historical, religious, and cultural similarities, there has been an increase in mistrust and dissatisfaction among Afghans toward both the Iranian government and segments of Iranian society. Furthermore, the expulsion of Afghan workers from construction, agriculture, and service sectors has resulted in a labor shortage in many Iranian projects.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 5 million Afghans live in Iran, including both legal residents and undocumented migrants. Iran's recent actions regarding forced expulsions have prompted responses from international organizations such as the UN, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch, which have condemned these actions as violations of human rights and called for their immediate cessation.

The Afghan government has repeatedly called for the respectful treatment of Afghan migrants and the facilitation of their voluntary and dignified return.

Civil rights and human rights activists in Iran have also expressed concerns through media and social networks, urging a more humane and responsible approach toward Afghan migrants.

According to the High Commission for Refugee Affairs of Afghanistan, more than 30,000 Afghan migrants enter Afghanistan daily through the Islam Qala border, and this trend continues. In recent years, over two million Afghan migrants have returned, either voluntarily or forcibly, from Iran to Afghanistan. This figure underscores the scale of the crisis.

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has prioritized addressing the issue of returnees by establishing the High Commission for Refugee Affairs. Field visits by commission members to border areas and coordination with relevant institutions are part of these efforts.

Despite limited resources, the Afghan government has been able to provide essential services such as registration, temporary housing, food and water distribution, healthcare, free transportation, SIM cards, cash assistance, and other necessary items to returnees. To date, over 3 billion Afghanis have been spent on these efforts.

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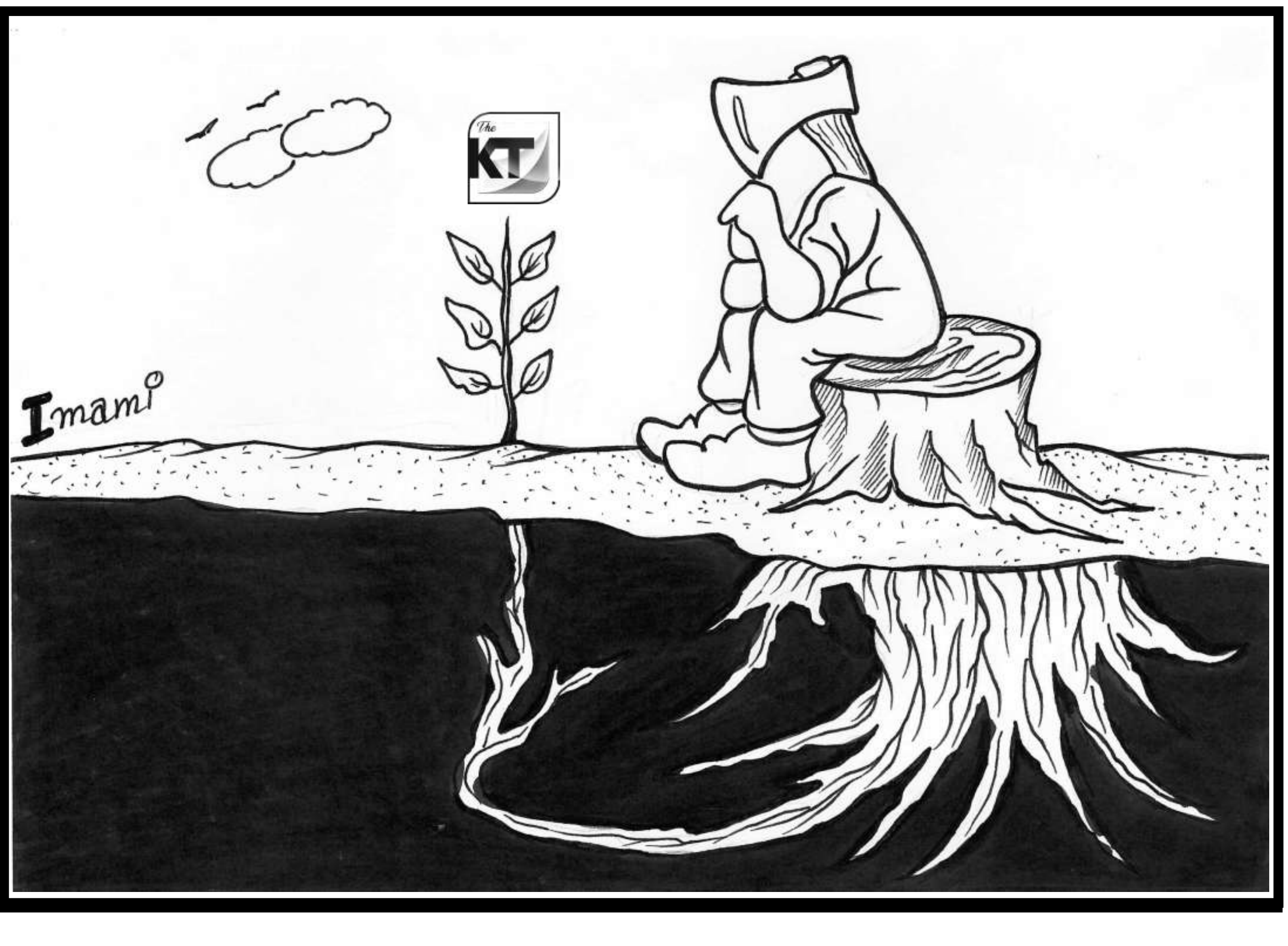

Despite ongoing bloodshed in Gaza, Netanyahu puts Trump forward for Nobel Peace Prize

In a move widely condemned by human rights groups, journalists, and global observers, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has officially nominated former U.S. President Donald J. Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize. The nomination comes at a time when Netanyahu faces mounting international criticism over the Gaza conflict, which has left an estimated 80,000 Palestinians dead, over 300,000 injured, and displaced more than 2.2 million people since October 2023.

Netanyahu's recommendation of Trump for one of the world's most prestigious peace honors has been described by many as a surreal and cynical political gesture, particularly as the Israeli leader is under investigation for alleged war crimes by international legal bodies.

Netanyahu's formal submission to the Nobel Committee reportedly praised Trump for his "historic contributions to peace in the Middle East," referencing the 2020 Abraham Accords that normalized relations between Israel and several Arab states. However, critics argue that this gesture grossly overlooks Trump's broader foreign policy legacy, which includes withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal and openly supporting Israel's contentious settlement expansions in the occupied West Bank.

But the most jarring element of the nomination is its timing: Netanyahu made the proposal while presiding over a military campaign in Gaza that has been described by numerous humanitarian agencies as "one of the deadliest and most destructive" conflicts in recent decades.

According to reports from United Nations agencies and independent monitoring organizations, the ongoing Israeli assault on Gaza has resulted in a death toll exceeding 80,000 people, a significant proportion of them women and children. Medical infrastructure has been decimated, with the World Health Organization confirming that more than 70% of Gaza's hospitals and clinics are no longer operational due to airstrikes and fuel shortages. The total number of injured has surpassed 300,000, with tens of thousands of civilians suffering amputations, paralysis, and long-term disabilities. Many of the wounded, doctors say, will never receive proper rehabilitation due to the collapse of the healthcare system under the blockade and bombing campaign.

Moreover, over 2.2 million Palestinians—virtually the entire population of Gaza—have been forcibly displaced, often multiple times, as entire neighborhoods have been flattened. Satellite images confirm that large swaths of the coastal enclave now resemble post-apocalyptic ruins, with little access to clean water, electricity, or food.

News of Netanyahu's nomination of Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize has ignited backlash worldwide. Amnesty International described the move as "a grotesque parody of justice," calling it "an insult to the tens of thousands of civilians who have died or suffered immensely under Netanyahu's command."

Nobel Peace Prize laureates including Malala Yousafzai and José Ramos-Horta have expressed dismay, urging the Nobel Committee to uphold the integrity of the prize. "This is not just tone-deaf," said Ramos-Horta, "it's a mockery of the pain of a nation whose existence is being systematically erased."

Social media exploded with criticism, with the hashtag #NotInOurName trending globally. Palestinian activists pointed out the bitter irony of Netanyahu—accused of orchestrating mass killings—proposing a peace prize for a political ally deeply complicit in those same policies.

Analysts suggest that Netanyahu's nomination of Trump is not only symbolic but deeply political. "It's a move aimed at shoring up support among Trump-aligned conservatives in the U.S. ahead of the 2024 elections," said Dr. Leila Awad, a political science professor at the University of Edinburgh. "It also serves as a distraction from Netanyahu's growing legal troubles and international isolation."

Trump, who has already been nominated several times by right-wing European politicians for his role in the Abraham Accords, welcomed the nomination but has not yet commented publicly on the Gaza war. His campaign spokesperson issued a statement saying the nomination is "a testament to President Trump's unmatched record on global peace."

Meanwhile, international calls for accountability continue to grow louder. The International Criminal Court is reportedly investigating war crimes in Gaza, and several governments have paused arms shipments to Israel. Protests in major cities like London, Paris, Istanbul, and Johannesburg have called for Netanyahu's arrest.

For many, the nomination feels like a grotesque inversion of justice. "The Nobel Peace Prize was meant to honor those who end wars," said Maha Khaled, a Palestinian journalist now in exile. "To nominate someone complicit in endless wars and destruction is to desecrate its very purpose."

As the world watches the devastation in Gaza, Netanyahu's bold nomination of Trump—while thousands lie buried in rubble—has only added to the growing sense of disillusionment with the international order and the mechanisms meant to protect human dignity. Mashal Noori

Cold storage shortage puts Afghan agriculture at risk

Afghanistan, a country blessed with diverse climates, fertile lands, and a predominantly rural population, relies heavily on agriculture and livestock. More than 70 percent of its people are directly or indirectly dependent on farming. Yet, despite this enormous natural potential, Afghanistan struggles to capitalize on its agricultural sector fully. One of the critical missing links in the country's agricultural value chain is the lack of standard cold storage facilities and post-harvest preservation systems.

This absence has become a hidden yet chronic crisis in Afghanistan's agricultural sector. Each year, thousands of tons of agricultural products perish before reaching the market, leading to significant financial losses for farmers, a decline in food security, volatile market prices, and a growing sense of disillusionment among rural communities.

In the absence of cold storage, especially for fruits and vegetables, produce must be sold immediately after harvest. This seasonal influx leads to oversupply in local markets, drastically lowering prices and forcing farmers to sell at rates far below production costs. Although consumers may temporarily benefit from cheaper prices, the producers — who have invested months of labor and resources — often end up incurring heavy losses.

Farmers from different provinces report that the lack of cold storage is not merely a technical shortfall but an economic emergency. For example, fruit that could fetch 50 Afghanis per kilogram in export markets ends up being sold for one-tenth of that price due to a lack of proper storage, a devastating blow to rural household economies.

The repercussions of this issue go far beyond individual farmers. The lack of post-harvest infrastructure has widespread social and economic consequences, including:

1. Rural Poverty and Decreased Motivation to Produce: Declining incomes drive farmers away from their land or force them to switch to low-cost, low-return crops.

2. Rural-Urban Migration: Harsh living conditions and lack of opportunities in rural areas push the youth towards cities or even to leave the country.

3. Weakening of Food Security: As fresh produce perishes, access to fruits and vegetables for vulnerable populations diminishes.

4. Reduced Export Potential: Many Afghan fruits like pomegranates, grapes, apricots, and apples have high export value. But without proper packaging and storage systems, opportunities to reach international markets are lost.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock has announced the construction of six new cold storage facilities with a capacity of 5,000 tons across six provinces. In addition, 32 cold storage units are currently operational nationwide — 9 are state-run and the rest are privately owned. While this is a step in the right direction, given the scale of agricultural production across the country, this capacity is grossly insufficient and cannot meet the needs of even a single high-yielding province like Nangarhar or Kandahar.

Moreover, the lack of an equitable distribution system for existing cold storage facilities — most of which are concentrated in urban centers — leaves remote farmers without access. Hence, the problem is not just about building storage units; proper planning and fair allocation are equally important.

Addressing this multidimensional crisis requires coordinated and diverse approaches:

1. Public-Private Investment Model

The government should encourage investment through interest-free loans, tax exemptions, and free land allocations. A Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model could be a sustainable way to attract domestic and foreign investors.

2. Decentralized Rural Cold Storage Units

Instead of focusing only on large central facilities, smaller storage units with 50–100-ton capacity should be established in high-yield villages. These can be run by agricultural cooperatives, allowing farmers to jointly manage and benefit from them.

3. Promotion of Low-Cost Local Technologies

Solar-powered cold storage units, natural drying techniques, and modern packaging can significantly extend product shelf-life at a fraction of the cost of traditional refrigeration.

4. Improved Market Linkages and Export Infrastructure

By connecting farmers to internal and external markets, the urgency to sell immediately is reduced. Strengthening transport infrastructure, establishing rural collection centers, and easing export procedures

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Returning refugees and shared responsibilities

Migration has been a constant in human history, driven by conflict, economic hardship, education, natural disasters, and the pursuit of safety. For Afghans, migration is not a new phenomenon—it is woven into our national story. From the invasions of colonial powers to decades of war, poverty, and instability, Afghans have repeatedly been forced to leave their homes, both within and beyond national borders. Today, however, we face a new chapter—one defined not only by return but by our collective duty to reintegrate those who are coming back.

Afghans, too, have a long history of migration. Over time, due to war, poverty, and foreign invasions, they have been forced to leave their homes—either relocating within Afghanistan or seeking refuge in far-off countries. These invasions didn't just topple Afghan governments but also caused the loss of our national wealth and brainpower. Foreign invasions and exile displaced even great figures like Avicenna, Jalaluddin Balkhi (Rumi), and Sayed Jamaluddin Afghan, who are now boldly claimed by other nations.

Unfortunately, Afghans currently live under severe pressure, threats, and humiliation in neighboring and European countries. Countries that once took pride in hosting Afghan refugees have now dishonored that hospitality with inhumane treatment. They even confiscate the hard-earned assets of these people before sending them back empty-handed. In some cases, Afghans with valid legal documents have still been forced to leave.

On the other hand, since the Islamic Emirate regained power, tens of thousands of Afghans have willingly returned to their homeland. The Afghan government has repeatedly urged Afghans living abroad to return, assuring them that their lives, property, and honor are safe. Perhaps for the first time in history, an Afghan government is welcoming returnees at such a significant level. Last year, returnees from Pakistan were honored, housed in camps, and transported in government vehicles to remote regions.

Now, once again, the deportation of Afghans—especially from Iran and Pakistan—has accelerated. According to the spokesperson of the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, around 1.5 million Afghans have returned from Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey since the start of the new solar year. Of these, half a million returned from Iran in just the past month. The ministry has stated that it has provided these returnees with essential food, non-food items, and cash assistance and housed them in temporary camps.

Shared Responsibilities of the Government and People Towards Refugees

Afghan refugees now urgently need emergency aid and support from both the government and the people. The Islamic Emirate has mobilized all its resources to uphold the rights and dignity of returnees. Alongside the government, international organizations have provided financial assistance, and their continued support is vital.

The UNHCR should ensure that its aid reaches the rightful beneficiaries directly, not through foreign governments, but through the Afghan government. In addition to financial support, returnees need psychological care and a sense of safety. They must not be subjected to any form of mental harassment, mockery, or ridicule over their dialects or circumstances.

Supporting Afghan refugees is not solely the government's duty. It is a shared responsibility of every citizen. First, returning families should be warmly welcomed, with kind words and hospitality. Every Afghan, even if they can only offer small material or emotional support, should not hesitate to lend a hand. If help isn't possible, at the very least, people should refrain from posting harmful or mocking comments on social media, which can demoralize returnees and drive them away from their homeland.

Returnees need time to readjust, naturally and gradually, to the culture and environment. Community leaders and shop owners will also be tested to see how ethically and morally they treat these vulnerable people. Do we exploit our fellow citizens in need, or do we fulfill our human and Islamic duty toward them?

Naturally, when they return to their homeland, many do so after a long absence, so they may feel alienated and unfamiliar with local customs, systems, and urban life.

See P4

Echoes from seistan: life, land, and limits on the edge

When George Passman Tate, a British surveyor working for the Indian Survey Department, travelled across Seistan in the early 20th century, he documented not only the terrain and the ruins but also the lives of the people who lived there—people shaped by wind, water, and tribal unity. His mission, though largely political, became a rare glimpse into the daily struggles and quiet strengths of those living on the edge of what is now south eastern Afghanistan and eastern Iran.

Tate was part of the Seistan Boundary Commission, a British-led effort to define the border between Afghanistan and Persia. His observations, however, went beyond politics. He described Seistan as a land of extremes—hot, dry, windy, and flat. The most famous natural force in the region was what locals called the "Wind of 120 Days," a seasonal storm that whipped through the area with such violence that it would bury homes under sand and ruin crops.

Life here was not just hard; it was a constant effort to survive in a place that gave little and demanded much.

In Tate's accounts, the people of Seistan appear resilient and deeply rooted in their tribal identities. Families lived in clusters, often in reed-built homes near seasonal water sources. Agriculture and animal herding were the primary sources of survival. Men and boys would walk long distances with sheep and goats in search of fresh pastures, while women managed homes built from dried mud and straw. Water was both a blessing and a curse. In good years, when the Helmand River flooded its banks and fed Lake Hamun, the land came alive with crops and movement. In dry years, families packed their belongings and moved on, chasing water like a ghost.

The villages that Tate visited were humble, often temporary. The people did not rely much on any central authority—either Afghan or Persian—because those governments had little control in such remote regions. Instead, tribal elders acted as the main authority figures, resolving disputes, organizing irrigation efforts, and deciding migration routes. The bond between tribe and land was strong, but not in the way modern land ownership is understood. Land belonged to whoever could farm it or feed animals on it. If it failed, they moved.

Borders meant little to them; survival meant everything.

Despite the simplicity of their lives, the people had a rich oral history and connection to the past. Tate, trained to observe and record, could not help but notice the ruins scattered across the desert—remnants of cities that once thrived with trade, religion, and power. He found broken pottery, carved stones, and the outlines of ancient fortresses. While he lacked the tools of modern archaeology, his notes remain valuable for what they hint at: that Seistan was once a centre of life along major trade routes, perhaps part of forgotten empires whose stories now exist only in dust and fragments.

Trade in the present day of Tate's journey was far more limited. Most exchanges were made through barter—animal hides for wheat, milk for cloth. There were few formal markets, and fewer roads. Goods moved slowly, if at all. But in every village, he entered, Tate found people who welcomed him, who told stories about the land and the floods and the wind, who took pride in surviving in a land so many would have fled.

Much of Tate's mission focused on drawing the new border between Afghanistan and Persia. He walked, measured, mapped, and discussed lines that would later appear on official documents and in future disputes. Yet he admitted, perhaps unintentionally, that the people did not see the land in the same way.

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THE KABUL TIMES DAILY
Saratan 22-1404 Sunday 13 July 2025 INo: 89-Vol: LXII

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Gurbaz powers Guyana Amazon Warriors to first win in Global T20 League

Rahmanullah Gurbaz played a stellar role in securing the first victory for the Guyana Amazon Warriors in the ongoing West Indies Global T20 League. In the fourth match of the tournament, the Warriors faced off against the Central Districts team and registered a commanding 66-run win, thanks to brilliant performances from both bat and ball.

Gurbaz, the Afghan opening batsman, was the star of the match with a powerful knock of 58 runs. His aggressive and confident batting provided a strong foundation for his team and set the tone early in the innings. His innings not only helped build momentum but also put pressure on the opposition bowlers from the start. On the bowling side, veteran spinner Imran Tahir delivered an outstanding performance, claiming 4 crucial wickets. His tight lines and variations dismantled the Central Districts batting lineup, preventing them from chasing the target and giving Guyana a comprehensive win.

This victory marks the first success for the Guyana Amazon Warriors in the tournament and boosts their confidence as they move forward. With key players like Gurbaz stepping up, the team hopes to build momentum and climb the points table. Rahmanullah Gurbaz was named Player of the Match for his match-winning innings. His performance was widely praised by commentators and fans alike, showcasing once again his value as a top-order batsman in T20 cricket.

The Kabul Times

O-Sport martial arts tournament held in Jalalabad

A one-day martial arts competition featuring the "O-Sport" style was held in Jalalabad city, Nangarhar province, with the participation of athletes from three eastern provinces — Nangarhar, Kunar, and Laghman.

Organized by the Martial Arts Federation under the Directorate of Physical Education and Sports in Nangarhar, the event brought together 50 athletes to compete in different age categories, including both youth and adult divisions.

The matches were held in a competitive and energetic atmosphere, aiming to promote martial arts among young Afghans and encourage sports participation across the region. At the end of the tournament, 25 athletes emerged victorious after defeating their opponents and were awarded medals and certificates of appreciation.

Officials from the Sports Directorate highlighted that such events are essential for discovering local talent, strengthening inter-provincial ties, and motivating youth toward positive and disciplined activities.

They added that the tournament not only provided a platform for healthy competition but also reflected the growing interest in combat sports in the eastern region of Afghanistan.

The winning athletes were honored at the closing ceremony with medals and certificates, while organizers praised all participants for their sportsmanship and dedication.

This competition is part of a broader effort to expand organized sports events in the country, promote unity among provinces, and invest in the potential of Afghanistan's youth through physical and mental development.

The O-Sport tournament concluded successfully, leaving a positive impact on participants and setting the stage for more inter-provincial sports initiatives in the future.

The Kabul Times

44 qualify as 75 battle in Kabul kickboxing tournament

Kabul's Directorate of Physical Education and Sports organized a one-day kickboxing selection tournament aimed at identifying top athletes from the Kabul province, as well as the North and South zones.

The event featured 75 male kickboxers from across these regions who competed for a place in the upcoming regional and national level competitions.

Held in a spirit of sportsmanship and healthy competition, the selection matches were conducted under professional supervision. The athletes displayed a high level of energy, discipline, and skill, highlighting the growing popularity and talent in the field of martial arts across Afghanistan.

At the conclusion of the day-long tournament, 44 outstanding athletes were selected to represent their respective zones — Kabul city, North, and South — in future provincial and national events.

These athletes were chosen based on their technical skills, physical performance, and overall attitude during the matches.

According to officials from the Kabul Sports Directorate, the goal of the competition was not only to select top performers but also to promote physical activity and martial arts among Afghan youth, and to prepare a strong team for inter-provincial competitions.

The organizers praised the participants for their enthusiasm and commitment, and they reiterated their support for providing more platforms for young athletes to grow and showcase their abilities. They also emphasized the importance of sports as a tool for peace, unity, and youth empowerment in the country.

This event reflects the continued efforts of Afghanistan's sports institutions to invest in the development of combat sports, particularly kickboxing, and to discover emerging talents from across different zones of the country. The selected athletes will now begin their training under the supervision of experienced coaches in preparation for their upcoming competitions.

The Kabul Times

Gaza ceasefire talks held up by Israel withdrawal plans: Palestinian sources

Indirect talks between Hamas and Israel for a ceasefire in Gaza are being held up by Israel's proposals to keep troops in the territory, two Palestinian sources with knowledge of the discussions told AFP on Saturday.

Delegations from both sides began discussions in Qatar last Sunday to try to agree on a temporary halt to the 21-month conflict sparked by Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7, 2023.

Both Hamas and Israel have said that 10 living hostages who were taken that day and who are still in captivity would be released if an agreement for a 60-day ceasefire were reached.

But one well-informed Palestinian source said Israel's refusal to withdraw all of its troops from Gaza was holding back progress on securing a deal.

"The negotiations in Doha are facing a setback and complex difficulties due to Israel's insistence, as of Friday, on presenting a map of withdrawal, which is actually a map of redeployment and repositioning of the Israeli army rather than a genuine withdrawal," the source said.

Hamas has said it wants the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza, which is home to more than two million people.

The source said, however, that the Israeli delegation presented a map at the talks which proposed maintaining military forces in more than 40 percent of the Palestinian territory.

"Hamas's delegation will not accept the Israeli maps... as they essentially legitimize the reoccupation of approximately half of the Gaza Strip and turn Gaza into isolated zones with no crossings or freedom of movement," the source added. Mediators have asked both sides to postpone the talks until the arrival of US President Donald Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, in Doha, they added. Alarabiya

Echoes from seistan: life, ...

From P3

Tribes often moved back and forth across the border without concern, following ancient paths based on grazing patterns and seasonal rains. These people saw themselves not as citizens of a state, but as members of families and tribes with histories older than any modern nation.

The challenges faced by Seistan's people were not only natural. The Helmand River, which gave life to the region, also brought destruction. Its course changed often, leaving fertile fields dry and flooding homes without warning. The dams and canals that the locals built were fragile, easily destroyed by a season of strong rain or ignored maintenance. And because so much of the land was flat and exposed, even small changes in climate could shift entire communities. Many times, families had to abandon villages they had lived in for decades, taking only what their animals could carry and starting again somewhere else.

Tate's journey through Seistan was one of both discovery and quiet admiration. He was a colonial officer with a task, but he also became a recorder of forgotten voices. His respect for the people shows in the way he wrote about them: not as subjects or problems, but as survivors of a hard life that many outsiders could not begin to understand. He saw in them a kind of strength that came not from wealth or power, but from adaptation—from knowing how to bend with the wind and work with the land, even when both were unkind. Over a hundred years have passed since Tate walked the dry paths of Seistan, but much of what he saw remains unchanged. The people still live close to the land. They still battle wind and drought and the consequences of political decisions made far from their homes. But they also still tell stories. They still build homes from reeds. They still walk beside their herds in the early morning light. And they still survive—proudly, stubbornly, quietly—on the edge of a world that too often forgets them. **Sumita Balouch**

Returning refugees and...

From P3

They should never be mocked or looked down upon. They must be given time to reintegrate. Most importantly, they must be helped out of any identity crisis, so they can breathe freely under the Islamic system and gradually reconnect with their society.

First and foremost, their housing, food, and employment needs must be addressed. Every citizen can help by offering them a place to live, easing rental terms, or guiding them towards livelihood opportunities. The Islamic Emirate should also prioritize employing skilled returnees and allocate land to landless families so that barren areas can be developed.

Afghan Migration Around the World

According to UNHCR statistics, Afghans currently make up the third-largest refugee population worldwide. There are approximately 7 million Afghan refugees globally. In 2024, Pakistan defied international refugee norms by initiating mass expulsions of Afghans, even seizing their property. Life for Afghan refugees in both Pakistan and Iran is extremely difficult. Around 2.5 million Afghans live in Pakistan, most of whom have been there for years. In general, conditions in these two countries are dire, with Afghan refugees facing mass deportations, insults, and unemployment. They are denied the right to work, study, or conduct business.

Many Afghans also reside in European countries, having fled due to long-standing war, poverty, and instability. The Islamic Emirate has consistently called on Afghans abroad to return and live dignified lives in their own homeland. The government has also encouraged Afghan investors and businesspeople to bring their investments home.

Recently, Iran has increased the mass deportation of Afghan refugees. Social media videos and images reveal harsh treatment and even beatings. Iran must not forget the kindness of the Afghan government, which once allowed Iranian pilgrims safe passage during difficult times and even waived visa fees for a month.

Afghans living abroad must realize that life and property in foreign lands are always at risk. More importantly, they risk losing their identity. The Afghan government has repeatedly invited refugees to return and promised full cooperation.

In short, the responsibility to support Afghan refugees lies heavily on the United Nations, the Afghan government, and the Afghan people. Each party must play its role in easing the burden on these returnees and helping them rebuild their lives.

Cold storage shortage...

From P3

to neighboring countries (Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Iran, India) can make a substantial difference. 5. International Support and Donor Engagement

International organizations such as the FAO, WFP, and the Islamic Development Bank can play a vital role by providing financial assistance, technical training, and successful pilot models that can be replicated across the country.

In conclusion, a cold storage facility is more than just a warehouse; it is a cornerstone for agricultural development, rural livelihood sustainability, economic stability, and poverty reduction in Afghanistan. In a country where nearly half of the economy is dependent on agriculture, ignoring such infrastructure is akin to turning off the taps of production.

The lack of cold storage not only destroys the hard-earned yield of farmers but also jeopardizes the future of agriculture in the country. However, this challenge also presents an opportunity. With commitment from the government, engagement of the private sector, and support from international stakeholders, Afghanistan can build a resilient and modern agricultural sector — one that ensures prosperity for farmers, food security for the population, and economic growth for the nation as a whole.

Abdul Hai Nasiri

The Painful Return...

From P2

In addition, a project to construct 35 residential complexes across 25 provinces has been launched, aimed at providing employment, education, and sustainable living for returnee families.

Despite the Afghan government's tireless efforts, the unprecedented wave of returnees requires widespread solidarity and cooperation from international organizations, investors, national businesses, and the general public. Without collective support, overcoming this crisis will prove difficult. It is essential for Iran, while safeguarding its national security, to adopt a humane and pragmatic policy toward migrants. This policy should focus on voluntary return, resettlement, and the issuance of temporary residency permits, in collaboration with international organizations, all while respecting human dignity.

The forced expulsion of Afghan migrants from Iran is a multifaceted challenge that cannot be addressed through security or temporary measures. This crisis reflects a failure in migration policymaking and a disregard for human dignity. If Iran seeks to maintain its position as a nation with a rich history of civilization, culture, and humanitarian values, it must reevaluate its policies and engage with the government of Afghanistan and the international community.

On the other hand, Afghan returnees must be viewed as a valuable human resource. If effectively managed and empowered, they can play a critical role in the reconstruction and sustainable development of Afghanistan.